

THE CYNICK.

BY GROWLER GRUFF, ESQUIRE,

AIDED BY A CONFEDERACY OF
LETTERED DOGS.

"We'll snarl, and bite, and play the dog,"

"For dogs are honest."

Vol. I. Saturday, December 7, 1811. No. XI.

TO ROBERT WALSH, ESQUIRE,

Editor of the American Review.

De republica graviter querens, de homine nihil dixit.

CICERO.

SIR,

I come before you without apology, and I shall address you without the ceremonials of an exordium. You have placed yourself in one of those high and dignified situations among men, in which every member of the commonwealth will either applaud or disapprove of your actions, according to the dictates of his heart and understanding; it is a privilege pertaining as well to the gossip as the author. In its commencement, your work promised to be the dawn of a new and happy æra in the politicks of our country; it promised a regeneration of that tone and dignity of patriotism and policy, which had

been debased and polluted by a mercenary and shameless set of men, who had long crowded with their narrow minded and unprincipled effusions the columns of our gazettes. You came forth clothed in moderation; and the toga was not degraded;—your language was chaste, and the harmony of the Muse denied not its graces and seductions: and even these claims on the publick attention were enforced with modesty, and you promised an extension and an improvement in your future efforts. A large portion of the people were well pleased, and even party opponents were not dissatisfied; such were the soothing prognosticks of the first number of the "American Review." But these fair creations have passed away, and we are left to lament the evanescence of an imagined excellence. The vestments of learning and philosophy are put off, and you have assumed the common and unchaste garb of political prostitution; the harmonious phrase of temperance is changed to the empty, unmeaning and licentious wordiness of intoxicated polemicks; and "Dat operam ut cum ratione insanias," is the only publick reward now bestowed on your toils. It is not my intention to assume the sceptre of criticism, either on the conduct, or execution of your book; but to censure some aberrations from propriety, which not only have a bad political tendency but are also a moral evil; I trust I feel it as a man should, and resent it in the name of my country, as a christian ought. The sacred functions of government and the sanctity of office, should not be debased in silence, for cavillers and brawlers to stain them with blasphemous and unmerited reproach; nor should the characters of good men be submitted to the blister-

ing tongue of slander without reprehension. If this case shall be confirmed, we may number our steps to the regions of anarchs and destroyers. It is an alarm which threatens the shrine of our dearest rights ;—it is a spectre, which precedes the entombing of national liberty, by furnishing every libidinous forager, either native or foreigner, an opportunity to violate those hallowed rights which have been purchased by libations of human blood and the immolations of human victims. It is such an injury as we should determine boldly and steadfastly to reprove. Were you a common abuser, you should be resigned to a common fate—oblivion. Newspapers will be scurrilous—perhaps it is necessary—they are the effusions of a day, and they pass unregistered ; but a book is (if it deserves to be) a lasting memorial ; at any rate it carries a solemnity with it which should vouch for the truth of its contents when they are given to the world as facts. You have related things which are not, with all the seriousness of truth, and some of its appearances. You have even essayed to be angry ; whether you have succeeded, I shall leave your readers to determine. You had taught your countrymen to believe, that you were the enemy of office hunters, speculators and economists ; that you were not the abettor of inflammatory politicks, nor a demagogue of party—“*Si sic omnia*”—but you have shewn yourself of late the instigator of political brawls ; the debaser of the dignities of office ; and the partisan of violence and scurrility. Instead of presenting yourself as the appeaser of that storm and warfare of party, which always rages with sufficient violence under free governments, you have taken to yourself the elo-

quence of the stentors of disorder. You have endeavoured to exert an energy of which you are not actually possessed, to stimulate us to violent and unruly acts. If it is the duty of every member of a government to support its peace and dignity, I ask, have your writings tended to do this? I leave it to your conscience to reply. In what the President of the United States has so much offended you, I cannot tell—you may have some private pique—great men will be haunted by enmities and desires—it may be so with you—that Mr. Madison has offended against other political creeds as well as yours, I am ready to acknowledge; nor do I at once espouse all the acts of his administration. I do not undertake to defend the character of Mr. Madison, he is very able to do that himself, against any pen our country boasts;—it is for the honour of the chair I speak. I have said that addresses to it should always be preferred in proper language, I say so again.—I have always been led to believe that where I am to be convinced of the force and propriety of invective, it should be first proved by temperate elucidation to have been deserved—but this is not your mode, sir; you break forth at once, and by the power of your incantations envelope us in thunders and lightnings, before we were aware that the sky was overcast—it appears at first view to be a mad rant, but on examination there is evidently a worse motive than the workings of passion—there is a cunning of imposition under this pretended bluster, very well calculated to mislead the unthinking and the violent. In testimony of this assertion, I shall refer you to your last paper on “Our Relations with France.” You have there, through the extent of

fifty pages, in a strain of passion and violence, muttered again and again, the worn out discontents of the newspapers; you have not enlarged our views on the subject, by a single demonstrative fact;—it is the mere vehicle of abuse. When I acknowledge that I do not approve of all the acts of our administration, I still less approve of the unwarrantable way you have taken to shew your disapprobation. Was it becoming the dignity of the author of the “American Review,” to descend to the vulgar subterfuges of a personal attack on Mr. Madison—and that of the least delicate kind?—there was no wit to palliate such a descent—you will blush, I am sure, at the remembrance of it—were the dignity of souls and the qualities of the mind to be estimated by corporal dimensions, Mr. Madison would not be the only sufferer. You have thrown your invective on the whole body of our government—you have not acknowledged the existence of an honest man or a good patriot beside yourself. In meanly villifying others, you have degraded your own dignity, and extinguished for ever the respect the publick had for your character. Do you suppose you are the only man in the country who has tears to shed over her past glories, or her present misfortunes?—it is an universal impulse—but you have arrogated to yourself the office of the thunderer—there must be no warfare but of your making, and no honour but of your reaping—you are intoxicated with your transatlantick fame; but you should not regard it as a thing so serious—they who have praised you, have praised you only as their servant—they have their own ends in view.—Much praise will make men presume, but in this country, as well as in

others, (even under so *vile* a government) good men will meet with their reward. Your path to fame was short;—you promised much at the beginning of your career, which has never been fulfilled—like all plants of rapid growth, your fame is already falling into the “sear and yellow leaf.”

HYLACTOR.

Series longissima rerum.

MY DEAR MR. GRUFF,

I am a young man of two and twenty, and have not been many years returned from college, where I picked up a little Latin, as you may see, just enough to frighten my mother and sisters with, and the dear girls that come to see them; and which I sometimes play into an argument, when I get the wrong side of a question, with a stubborn, straight-headed fellow, who does not understand any, and get the better of him, with those who think a bit of Latin, or Greek, or French, to be irresistible. But this is only when my father is not at home; for when he is present, all my Latin sinks into my belly, and no pumping can raise it—as he has already caught me half a dozen times quoting the wrong author, as Joannes Secundus for Tacitus, and Ovid for Sallust; and sometimes coming out with a scrap of Horace’s love ditties in an argument upon brewing. At another time he joked me for applying the *simplex munditiis* to a greasy tallow-chandler’s daughter; and when on a Sunday evening I had spun out half a dozen stanzas to her upon her cruelty in breaking her promises to me, he came in

when I had left the room for a moment, and heading the ode with *miseri quibus intentata nites*, sent it immediately to the lady, and told me to write a play called the *Greasy Daughter*.

But this is not the worst, good Mr. Gruff, and I write it to you, in hopes that the old man may read your paper and profit by it, for, not content with making me heartily sick and tired of Latin, he bores me to death with English; and many a long winter's evening, when I have been out to see some of my sister's companions with her, and have come home fatigued with their tattle, the old gentleman lays me under contribution, and while my head is almost dropping off with sleep, he entertains me with the history and genealogy of his own family, which I have heard at least five hundred times: last week he told me for the fortieth time, how he became acquainted with Benedict Blackbeard, that he brought him a letter of introduction from a respectable house in Europe, of which he incidentally, and by way of episode, gave me a sketch of the rise and progress, whence he took occasion to descant upon the rougery and misfortunes of trade; assuring me that he had known a merchant to be vile enough to effect an insurance upon a vessel, as containing sugar, or rum, or some other valuable articles, when, in fact, she was laden with old hogsheads filled with stones, and when at sea was scuttled by order of the owner, who came upon the underwriter for the loss, the amount of which he very calmly and unceremoniously pocketed. On the heads of the misfortunes I was led a distant voyage to the East-Indies, while he enlarged upon the nature of the monsoons, why so cal-

led, &c. &c.; then popping upon the Malays, I was entertained with remarks upon a savage life, and a comparison between civilized and untutored man.

I am always in the greatest fear of asking him who such a person is, or who Mr. B. was married to; for as surely as I do, I receive a history of the connexions on both sides, of the lineal descendants, and all the collateral ramifications. In short, so much is my father at home on these subjects, that I am determined, unless he spares me, to make him study heraldry, when he shall open an herald's office, while I pocket the fees. When he begins, it is my intention to issue a prospectus, in which I will offer mine and my father's services, to trace any applicant in a line of descent from whatever source he pleases; and to furnish him with a coat of arms, quartered to his heart's desire. We will bring down Snip the tailor, in an unblemished pedigree, from the ancient thread cutter Clotho, without difficulty, and quarter him with a goose and a pair of shears, couchant, and one of the Egyptian plagues, rampant. Snob, the shoemaker, we will deduce regularly from that old bull's hide cutter, Dido, whom we can prove to have been nothing more than a jade of a shoemaker, and to have fled from Tyre because she made a pair of shoes for the king, so tight, that they raised a blister on his heel. Snob's coat shall be quartered with one of the fraternity couchant, that is *lying*, and a customer rampant—motto, "Lord how this world is given to lying." And to conclude our examples, it will give us infinite satisfaction to trace any of our legal friends from one of the harpies, for whom we shall find a tolerable coat, quartered with a couchant bill

of costs, (ut supra) with a black sheep rampant—motto, “Fee, faw, fum.”

These are my plans, Mr. Gruff—and if I can neither stop my old father’s mouth, nor turn his genealogical garrulity to any profit, I shall be in utter despair; and, therefore, I have, by way of anticipation, applied to you for advice, in case all my schemes should fail. I have some claims on you, sir, inasmuch as I am constantly on the growl, and have become very snappish of late, being perplexed and worried out of all my good humour, by the catalogue of grievances which I have just been detailing to you, and which you must acknowledge would make any of your most servile and menial spaniels, if any you have, grow cross, and shew their teeth. Do, good Mr. Gruff, let me know soona how you think I ought to act on this occasion, if my plan should fall through; for which you shall be heartily thanked, by the grateful

SAMUEL WHINE.

[The evils of which our correspondent Samuel complains, are of a most alarming nature, and call for immediate attention. This *cacoethes loquendi* is of a fatally ominous aspect, and is infinitely worse than the itch of scribbling, as many a poor devil has a tongue at command, who cannot raise the wind to furnish himself with a sheet of paper, or pen and ink. We are on the eve of a war, and it is dreadful to think how the soldiers of our country are exhausting themselves, and injuring their lungs. We would look to Congress for redress, but we are told this is a free country, and we find the members indulging the same propensity, and so much attach-

ed to the custom, that they will dispute about a pin's head, or a goat's hair; and will abuse every body and every thing, in order that they may say something.

We, however, recommend to our good friend Samuel, whose case we have very much at heart, that he put his plan into immediate execution; and if he fail here, we would propose his searching out some old housekeeper for his father, whom we understand to be a widower, and that she be plentifully endowed with the gift of gab, and to allow her something extra out of his own pocket, to keep the mill a-going, when he may with safety pit her against the old gentleman; and if she does not find employment for him, and silence his battery, we have no confidence in our knowledge of old women. We recommend to his choice, one from among the good old true blue Presbyterian stock; and that she may have a plentiful stock of religious notions, from the pious stands by of the church.

If this advice cannot be followed, we think his case to be of a desperate nature, and there is probably but one desperate expedient left. This abuse of the tongue is a common nuisance, and Samuel has it only left to consider, as a son, whether he will bring an action on the case against his father, for the special damage done to his peace, his health and convenience, and state the injury he has sustained, at any particular sum; and if we had a court of chancery, he might move the court for an injunction, upon the exercise of the old man's tongue, in nature of an injunction to stay waste; but then he must take of the defendant's answer—

TRIALS AT BAR.

Present—MINOS, RHADAMANTHUS and AEACUS.

Memoranda.

This term Mercury was reinstated in the office of sheriff, from which he had been for some time degraded, in consequence of a quarrel between him and Charon, about some comely ghost.

The right honourable quondam chief justice Jefferys, received the thanks of the court for the zealous assiduity, with which he exercised the office of chief bellows blower, into which he had been installed immediately on his descent.

Minos. Mr. Attorney, the court are now prepared to go to business, and beg you to use all possible dispatch, as the rapid progress of medical discoveries has increased our business so much of late, that we shall not be able to go through the lists, if we do not stick devilish close to our work.

Attorney. May it please your honours, I am in momentary expectation of the sheriff, with some ghosts of a singular description, whom I will have immediately arraigned.

Mercury (without.) Clear the passage there—walk in gentlemen, you are privileged members of the bar, *pro hac vice*, and shall have a suit apiece.

Attorney. May it please the court, the prisoners are arrived, and I will now proceed. The first case is that of a medical student, just come to hand, whom an exasperated Dutchman kicked out of his window and broke

his neck, because he gave his cat a dose of jalap, and put some hot pitch on her tail, to draw the pain out of her tooth. Charon was so much pleased with his merits, as he termed them, that he would not charge him a farthing for his passage. *Crier, call Doctor Sydenham.*

Crier. Doctor Sydenham.

Sydenham. Here.

Attorney. Well, Doctor, what charges have you to prefer against the criminal?

Sydenham. This, sir, is a modern doctor, of the new school, and if the sentence were imposed upon him which his merits deserve, he ought to have his intestines, from the pylorus to the rectum, injected with hot sealing wax, and his diaphragm given to a cook for a dish cloth. By the immortal Hippocrates, I do not believe he knows the difference between *Saccharum album pulverisatum* and pounded chalk, or knows whether the dura mater is in the head or the belly. He, sir, has exploded the doctrine of nosology, combining all the diseases into one of a monstrous and giant nature, and by the unity of his doctrine will soon make mankind very unique, by kicking ninety-nine out of a hundred to the devil. With the leave of the court, I'll ask him a few questions.

Pray, good doctor, since you have so ingeniously consolidated diseases into one, it is natural for me to ask have you not some one universal specific?

Student. Oh, yes—starvation—Sometimes, in alarming cases, we precede it by an emetic and a cathartic, in order that the body may be the sooner discharged of the grossness of offensive matter. When the system is thus reduced to its natural state, a course of starvation must

be rigidly pursued, in order that those principles and causes which have been displaced by the ravages of the affection, may have an opportunity of being restored, and unclogged, and as it were, like a pendulum *in vacuo*, receive no physical obstructions to their operation.

Sydenham. Ha ! ha ! ha !—excellent reasoner—theoretical practitioner. Well, but doctor, how would you do if your patient was dying with hunger ? give him a dose of emetic, eh ! to turn the coats of his stomach inside out, to see how far the gastric juice had progressed—or give him a light purge to carry the bile off ? But, suppose, sir, that notwithstanding all your efforts, impurities would still remain, and obstruct the smooth vibration of your pendulum, what would you resort to next ?

Student. The giant enemies of disease and death—venesection and sudorifics—bleed him until I drew as much as I possibly could of that sink of corrupt humours, the blood, from him, and then sweat out the impurities of the remainder, by clapping him into a warm bath, and then into a hot oven of about 100° Farenheit.

Sydenham. Implacable enemy of death, what pity he has caught you at last, for I tremble lest he has in store for you an oven somewhat hotter, where he'll sweat you with the devil to it. What an excellent *corps de reserve* a regiment of such fellows would make to a French legion. But suppose, for instance, now, that you had in hand a tanner, whose hide stood proof against your sudorific battery—plump him in one of the lime vats, eh, to open his pores ?

Student. Sir, I'll not be questioned by you any longer, and if I had my will I'd have you well curried for

trying to stump me, after I have received a diploma, and freed a thousand persons from their pains.

Court. Well, Dr. Sydenham, we think you have questioned him pretty closely, and we leave it to your good sense to consider, whether it is necessary for you to go further.

Sydenham. May it please your honours, I have done, and I suggest it for the reflection of the court, whether it were not better to preserve him as an useful instrument for the purposes of justice. I think you had better send him to the most rascally prisoners at the bottom of Tartarus; and turn him loose to practice among them. May your mercy send them no heavier retribution.

Minos. By Pluto, you speak well, doctor, and we'll have you appointed physician to the court for the idea. Here, Mr. Sheriff, bring all the young M. D's into court immediately—stop their punishments, and remove my lord chief blower Jefferys from the lowest station to the one above, for his duties there are superseded, as we can supply his place more to our satisfaction.

Mercury. The court shall be obeyed. (Exit.)

Student. I bow with submission to your honours, and only wish, to complete your judgment, you would add the learned doctor Sydenham to the number of our patients—I think a little caustic would do him good.

Students (without.) Huzza—huzza—huzza.—Mr. Mercury, you are a good gentleman-usher—present us to the court, we long to see these upright judges.

Mercury. Come, gentlemen, not quite so fast—put up your lancets and your pill boxes, or I shall move the court, that you shall turn them on yourselves.

Students. Oh, Lord, oh!—be quiet, Mercury, that's a good soul.

Court. Walk in, gentlemen—let us range you in order for your destination—Crier, count.

Crier. One, two, three, four, five—pheugh! by your worships' leave, some one better skilled in numbers must undertake it—why, sir, there's half a million—holla! stop, gentlemen, you'll squeeze us to mummy,

Court. Mercy on our souls—stop them, Mr. Sheriff—head them—lead them off to their prey.

Omnes. Oh, what a devil of a fright they put me in—help, Dr. Sydenham.

Passing by the shop of Jemmy Quin, shaver and segar merchant, the other day, when he was exercising on a customer the functions of his trade, called to my memory some melancholy recollections of the past. Is it not singular, said I to myself, that such a noble animal as man should suffer himself to be so dishonoured by ill gotten customs, executed by as ill gotten men. Oh, what a perverted creature is he made, by taylors, cobblers, hatters, wig-makers and barbers—more particularly by the last, by whom “he is as easily led by the nose as asses ape.” Oh, how is the human countenance degraded, by these despoilers of grace and comeliness;—men were aware of this, when from barber they have derived barbarous, barbarian, &c.; and I have no doubt in my own mind, that they trace their origin from the coast of Barbary. Hair, that delightful ornament of the face, like the flourishes round a piece of writing, gives such

softness, taste, and effect, that nature cries out from every little capillary tube, for its preservation. Lycurgus, Phidias, Adrian, and a large catalogue more, of unsophisticated men, held hair to be one of the essentials of beauty and character. Homer, in describing the sublimity and terror of the countenance of Jove, ascribes them to his brows, his beard, and curling hair. Ossian sets off the warlike appearance of his heroes by dishevelled or uncombed hair—by the wind whistling through a beard; and various other capillary allusions—and Shakespeare, in various instances, asserts the dignity of the matchless clothing of the chin. I have always been of opinion, that he alluded to this, when he makes Wolsey say, lamenting his fall, that, “he bore his blushing honours thick upon him”—meaning, that if his griefs had happened at any period anterious to this, he should have been better able to support them, but to have come upon him now, when his face was fledged with honour, was past endurance—though I do not agree with a friend of mine, who says the word blushing, here, plainly informs us that his beard was red. I shall intimate this idea to Cooper, the first time he performs the character, in order that he may give my new reading; which may be very emphatically expressed by stroking his beard when repeating the line. But all this is over: modern gentlemen, like modern architects, have erased the Gothic sublimity, retaining only some solitary vestiges of its decorations. Beards have given way to whiskers—and gloomy corridors to light galleries. That dapper gentleman of Rome, Scipio Africanus, is the first diurnal shaver we are acquainted with; did Rome ever before

lose so much dignity in one day? But as the antiquarian reveres the ancient and disfigured hilt of a rusty sword, although the blade be wanting; so I, beards being abolished, love to dwell on those vestiges of antiquity, whiskers—not only because they are ornamental, but for their utility also; physiognomists have been long in the wane, and not without cause, for they have pretended to ascribe significations to traits which have none—who would ever have thought that the nose of a man should signify any thing, seeing that no two men have noses alike?—and I maintain that the tempers and dispositions of men may be ranked under two or three classes. Nor are the natural appearances incident to beards and whiskers, the sole or grand feature of their augury, but the modifications they undergo from the visitations of fashion and fantastick disposition; even the temper and attributes of nations, may be distinguished by its airy faced inhabitants—the proud and haughty Spaniard is depicted in his mustaches; and how much a cunning and flattery are ambuscaded in the whiskers of a Frenchman—What a quantity of avarice and usury in the pointed beard of a Jew broker—Those tasteless and desolating barbarians, the Coths, wore but one mustache, which plainly indicated their character; and in our days, fortunes are made out of our fashionable youth, from the sale of bear's grease, Maccassar and Russian oils; for beards are now as necessary as breeches, to help a sleek beau into the good graces of love-lorn ladies—smooth faces are insignificant, say they—one likes the soft, meandering whisker, that leads all the rays of vision to a focus on the lip, that implement of a lady's amusement—

these are generally indicative of fancy, and portend poetry and a cultivated taste. Then there's the short, trim whiskered gentry, cut close to the ear—these are worn by money makers, and would-be philosophers, who hope by their sage and tasteless appearance, to slide into the favour of a rich, phthisicky grandmother or maiden aunt, and are generally not much admired by the young women. Another wears his whiskers tapering gently to the apex of the chin—these, where not worn as a preventive of toothache, predict a most vile perversion of taste, much affectation, and an utter want of talents in the wearer. When straight and black, they indicate courage and determined spirit—but of all whiskers, the curling are most indicative of talents and genius—a thousand ideas and theories lie in ambush beneath each particular curl; and poetry, politicks and philosophy, cluster every hair like ropes of onions.

I have filled my paper, and am forced to desist; but, before long, I shall immortalize myself, and benefit mankind, by framing a system of cilicious philosophy, to the utter destruction of phisiognomy, palmistry, and all other pickpocket two-penny theories of augury; and demonstrate to mankind, that the fate and fortune of man, do indeed hang on a hair.